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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the rationale for, and functions of, national library policies within African countries; discusses some of the issues raised concerning national library policies at the 1970 meeting at Kampala of the Experts on the National Planning of Documentation and Library Services in Africa and at other similar conferences; reviews the legislative history of the public library movement in Tanzania; and outlines in detail the content and impact of the 1975 Tanzanian Library Services Board Act. A 10-item reference list accompanies the text. (JL)

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OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 10

Possibilities of an Integrated National Library Policy for African Countries

by

E.E. Kaungamno

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Possibilities of an integrated national Library policy for African countries.*

By Ezekiel E. Kaungamno, B.A. M.L.S.
Director, Tanzania Library Service

I see from the topic of my paper that I am supposed to talk about possibilities of a unified national library policy for African countries. 'Possibilities' is probably the most suitable word here because one cannot talk about a blue-print for a national policy for many African countries whose back-grounds as we know vary a great deal.

It is probably safe to assume that there is a unanimous consensus among us on the reasons for an integrated library policy rather than on how the implementation of such a policy should be carried out-in other words to what extent should library services be integrated? I will consider first the need for library networks and how these ought to be integrated. P.H. Sewell, Senior Library Adviser to the Department of Education and Science, England, has pointed out that there are four main reasons for integration:

> "First the expansion of knowledge and of the records of knowledge is making it less possible for the individual library to acquire all the materials necessary to meet the special needs of its users. Second, with the escalation of prices of library materials, the resources available to an individual institution or service makes it less possible each year to meet those needs from its own resources. Third, we now have the potentialities of mechanized services both in relation to library housekeeping routines and in relation to mechanized bibliographical information services, together with the pressures for standardization of techniques and for cooperative action which such developments bring in their train. A fourth factor is that, with higher levels of education becoming more readily available, and with the broadening of interests and sophistication of thought brought about by the modern range of mass communication, it is becoming less possible to categorize public libraries as serving in the main people of limited intellectual range and ability."[1]

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*Paper delivered during the commemoration of 25 years of the Ghana Library Board - Ghana - 22nd - 26th September, 1975 The theme was "Future of Library Systems in Africa."

These are personal reasons which P.H. Sewell has put forward for an integrated library policy for Great Britain.

Joseph Becker has similarly argued for an establishment of an information network in the United States.[2] To him, three motivating forces are responsible for such a move. The first is service. By drawing effectively on external sources thus supplementing local collections librarians are able to serve their readers more effectively. Economics is the second factor. Financial pressures have forced libraries to consider ways of sharing rather than duplicating materials as the publishing rate and the cost of materials are beyond the financial capability of individual libraries. The third motivating force is technology. Computers, as he has put it, have brought "an individual user and his sources of information closer together."

I have intentionally made quotations with reference to Great Britain and the United States as examples to show that even these advanced countries, which are financially far much better off than African countries, feel the great need for a unified national library policy. It is therefore quite clear that the need for integrated library services for African countries should be most urgent.

Indeed the Meeting of Experts on the National Planning of Documentation and Library Services in Africa held in Kampala in 1970 realized the urgency of an integrated library policy.[3] A general survey of the library conditions prevailing in Africa indicated for example that apart from university libraries and some public libraries, many school, college and special libraries were in very unsatifactory state. In only a few countries there were separate national libraries while in other the functions of national libraries were performed by university and public libraries. The existence, or otherwise, of library legislation varied from one country to another. In some countries legislation was lacking and in others it was thought to be inadequate. Progress in libraries was hindered by lack of trained and experienced personnel and that existing training facilities were inadequate. "The meeting unanimously recognized the decisive role librarians and libraries have to play within the planning and the implementation of a national book development programmes. It was realized that the role was not limited to libraries only, but that there are many fields in which librarians and libraries could either be instrumental or could serve as a source for advice, information and research. In particular it was found that libraries should give special regard

to the needs of new literates emerging from literacy campaigns with a view to meeting the requirements of this new and rapidly growing mass market and to avoid the relapsing of new literates into illeteracy."[4]

The meeting called for cooperation between different types of libraries to avoid duplication and to enable the exploitation of resources to the full and pointed out that what was required was a strong single network of libraries of all kinds. In view of the above observations it was agreed, among other things, that in each country the body responsible for library planning should be created and backed by legislation. The planning body would have the following functions:[5]

(i) to prepare and to cost a coordinated development plan for all types of libraries within the national development plan.

(ii) to harmonize the allocation of resources for library development, both from internal and external sources, and

(iii) to establish national standards for efficient library services of all kinds.

In countries where national libraries as such exist the meeting recommended that they should among other things, serve as the primary instrument for the achievement of coordinated library development."[6]

The 1970 Kampala Meeting was one of a series of regional expert meetings in the field of planning of documentation library and archives infrastructure organized by UNESCO. Similar meetings have been organized in Latin America (Quito 1966) Asia (Colombo 1967) and Arab States (Cairo 1973). All these meetings, particularly the Intergovernmental Conference on the Planning of National Documentation, Library and Archives infrastructures convened in Paris from 23 to 27th September 1974, should give a framework on which an integrated national library policy for each African country should be built. As you will remember the UNESCO conference reiterated the importance of planning national information systems (NATIS) as integral components on national development plans. The NATIS concept was unanimously adopted by the conference which advised each Member State to ensure that there is a coordinated planning of all libraries, documentation centres and archives

in order to maximize the use of all relevant information essential for the development of the country.[7]

What then are the possibilities for an integrated library policy for African countries? I will present to you one possibility. I will discuss, as a case study, the national library policy for Tanzania.

First some background information. Public library movement in Tanzania began in 1963 with the passage of an Act which empowered the Board to promote, establish, equip and develop libraries in mainland Tanzania. From that time the Board was pre-occupied with the tremendous task of extending library services all over the country. At the same time the Board had to decide, among other things, the relationship between the then Tanganyika Library Service and other types of Libraries.

In July the Board, faced with many demands from Government Ministries as well as parastatal organizations for assistance with the organization of libraries, appointed an expert to review the situation within the following terms of reference:

(a) to survey the existing library resources of each ministry and parastatal and report critically on the effectiveness of these libraries in meeting existing and possible future requirements.

(b) to examine the feasibility of coordinating these individual libraries into one service and linking this service with the National Central Library with particular reference to:

(i) improving the various libraries
(ii) achieving economies where possible
(iii) ensuring full exploitation of the country's overall library resources, and
(iv) securing adequate training facilities and promotional outlets for the staff.

The expert, Mr. F.N. Hogg, Principal of the College of Librarianship, wales found among other things, that the pattern of libraries in Tanzania resembled closely that of Britain where the academic, public, speciall and other library and information services were established and grew in a haphazard way with the result that there was overlapping of services and waste of resources. He finally recommendod that all libraries in Tanzania should be coordinated by the Tanganyika Library Service. However for reasons beyond the scope of this paper, the report was never implemented.

With the passage of the Tanganyika Library Services Board Act of 1963 what problems were encountered in implementing the Board's over-all national library responsibilities? In passing I would first like express my sincere appreciation to Ghana for her pioneering work in libraries particularly in library legislation. The Ghana Library Ordinance of 1950 was the conceptual framework for the 1963 Tanzania Library Act, much as it has been for several African countries. The general and sweeping functions of the Board with regard to the promotion, establishment, equipping and development of libraries have, in a way, been a blessing in disquise in that the Board has been able to extend its powers to other types of libraries apart from public libraries. However, it has not been easy for the Board to enforce its decisions on non-public libraries because of the general nature of the legislation. I realize, as it has been pointed out by Miss Evalyn Evans the former Director of the Ghana Library Services and drafter of the Ghana ordinance of 1950 that an effective legislation must, among other things, be both simple and general,[8] allowing for development but I am almost convinced that legislation stipulating general powers is useful up to a certain level of development. At least for Tanzania I think it has now reached a stage when the functions of the Board have to be specific and comprehensive.

Thus for Tanzania it was felt necessary to review the library legislation in order to ensure that it was in line with up-to-date international library trends, and that it lives up to the NATIS concept. Therefore on 21st March, 1975 the Tanzania Parliament passed the 1975 Tanzania Library Services Board Act which repealed the 1963 Act.[9] The new Act which came into operation on 1st July, 1975 was enacted in order "to reorganize the Tanzania Library Services Board so as to confer upon the Board wider functions. The Board will have the functions not only in relation to library services but also in relation to documentation services, training of librarians, control and supervision over public libraries, promotion of literacy campaigns, stimulation of public interest in Tanzania literature, promotion and development of indigenous literature and other allied functions in relation to libraries and literature. The words "public library" have been given a broad definition and they mean "any library to which a member of the public has or is permitted to have access, whether on payment of any fee, or

by virtue of his being a member of any community, club, association, or institution or otherwise." Thus the definition covers almost, if not, all libraries in Tanzania."

The functions of the Board have been outlined in section 4(i) of the Act and these are:

(a) to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries in the United Republic,

(b) to set up, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop documentation centres and to provide documentation services,

(c) to provide facilities for the study of and for training, in, the principles, procedures and techniques of librarianship and such other related subjects as the Board may from time to time decide,

(d) to conduct examinations and to grant diplomas certificates and other awards of the Board,

(e) to sponsor, arrange and provide facilities for conferences and seminars for discussion of matters relating to library and documentation services,

(f) to initiate, sponsor participate, finance and assist in campaigns for the eradication of illiteracy,

(g) to provide an efficient library service both in the urban and rural areas and to stimulate public interest in literature generally and in Tanzania literature in particular;

(h) to sponsor, promote, assist and engage in the production of books and other literary works;

(i) to assume responsibility for the revival, production and preservation of indigenous and traditional literary works;

(j) to plan and coordinate library and documentation services in the United Republic;

(k) to advise the Government and parastatal institutions on all matters relating to the production of books and other literary works;

(l) to advise the Government and parastatal institutions on all matter relating to library and documentation services.

(m) to provide advisory services and financial and technical assistance necessary for or incidental to the proper and officient development of enterprises engaged in the production of books and other literary works; and

(n) to carry out research in the development of library and documentation services and the production and marketing of books and other literary works.

Section 5 (1) of the Act outlines the power of the Board in relation to other libraries: The Board may, with the consent of the Minister of National Education make by - laws -

(a) requiring all or any category of public libraries to be registered with the Board,

(b) prohibiting employment of any person as a librarian of any public library unless such personal holds a degree, diploma or other award specified in such by-laws;

(c) requiring such schools as may be specified in the by-laws to establish and maintain libraries in such manner and of such standard as may be prescribed,

(d) requiring public libraries registered with it to comply with such requirements as may be prescribed.

Section 5 (3) stipulates that it shall be lawful for the Board by notice in writing to require any person responsible for the management of any public library registered with it to make available in or to remove from any library such books and other unsuitable literary works as the Board may in such notice specify.

The new Act has also repealed the Libraries (Deposit of Books) Act of 1962. Under the old Act every printer of every book in Tanzania was required to deliver at his own expense one copy of the book to the deposit section to the University Library and under the Libraries (Deposit of Books) Order 1963 (an extension of the 1962 Act) every printer was required to deliver an additional copy to the Director of Library Services.

Section 5 (2) of the 1975 Act stipulates that it shall be the duty of every person who prints or produces or causes to be printed or produced in mainland Tanzania any book or other literary work intended for sale or public distribution or exhibition, whether in consideration of any fee or otherwise, to supply to the Board, free of charge, not less than two copies of such book or other literary work. However in the case of any gramophone record of film, the Board may direct that the person producing it should supply the Board with one copy only.

According to the 1975 Act the definition of a book includes document, periodical, magazine, newspaper, pamphlet, music score, gramophone record, picture print, engraving, etching, deep, photograph, map, chart, plan, film, filmstrip, microfilms, slide, manuscript and any other article or thing of a like nature provided for use in any library.

Provisions here been made in the Act for the enforcement of the stipulations. Thus any person who does not comply with the requirements for the registration of libraries, the employment of librarians, library standards and legal deposit shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to afine not exceeding twenty thousand shillings (about $ 3,000) or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

In order to enable the Tanzania Library Services to implement the programmes, the financial sources of the Board have been widened. The funds of the Board consist of:

(a) such sums as may be provided by Parliament by way of loan or grant;

(b) any gift, bequest or donation;

(c) any sums which may in any manner become payable to or vested in the Board and;

(d) any sums borrowed by the Board. Unlike the old Act, the new Act empowers the Board, with the prior approval of the Minister, to borrow money by way of loan or overdraft.

There have also been some changes regarding the appointment of the members of the Tanzania Library Services Board and the Director of Library Services. Under the old Act the Chairman and members of the Board were appointed by the Minister for National Education. The Director was appointed by the Board but the appointment had to be approved by the Minister. However, under the 1975 Act the Chairman of the Board and the Director of Library Services are appointed by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

These are some of the new stipulations in the new Act. With a strengthened legislative framework, the Tanzania Library Services Board forges ahead with the provision of Library facilities to the nation through:

(a) Urban Library service i.e. building a major library in each region.

(b) Rural library service - provision of books to rural areas by mobile libraries.

(c) Postal library service - sending books by mail to areas without library facilities.

(d) Book Box Service - collections of books are offered free of charge on loan to various institutions.

(e) School library service - organization of school libraries.

(f) Special library Service - organizing and giving library advice to libraries in ministries, parastatals and other organizations.

I have outlined some of the provisions in the new Act which is just beginning to be implemented. The Act is the Back-bone of an integrated library policy for Tanzania. Other countries may or will, of necessity, have different approaches. However, whatever policies are or will be formulated it will be important to consider some of the following factors:

(i) The institutions to be integrated may be autonomous organizations with their own budgets and personnel, or non-autonomous units within a parent organization.

(ii) The integrated approach may be in a form of a library system or network. P.H. Sewell has found it necessary to distinguish between library networks and library

systems. "While the former implies an operational relationship between individual services, the latter implies that the various libraries linked up operationally have, on the one hand, specific objectives in relation to their own readership and that (in the case of a national library system) these objectives are seen in turn as integral parts of the total national objective."[10]

(iii) The libraries may therefore be organized into:

a library system - ie. grouping libraries of one type within a single administration.

a library network - i.e. more loosely knit groups consisting of independently administered libraries which form operative links for the purposes of maximizing efficiency in the use of national resources.

The planning of the nature and levels of integration which, in fact, spell out the interrelations between various institutions is probably the greatest headache to whoever plans an integrated national policy, as it may result in differences of opinions among those who are affected by such a policy. It requires skilled and accomplished administrators to effect the appropriate integrated national library policy. The problem is however not insurmountable. Where there is determination and cooperation among all those concerned it can be done! It can be done if all of us play our part.

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